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ABSTRACT

This project addressed an important need of national significance, namely the development, implementation, and evaluation of a model to advnce the effective use of paraprofessionals to support students with disabilities in general education classes. This report describes the project's objective and their status along with 15 print products developed by the project that include 5 published research studies and one other study currently being prepared for publication review. The remainder of the report describes efforts to sustain the project's impact after the grant period ends and assurance of distribution. (Author)

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Final Report: Paraprofessional Support of Students With Disabilities in General Education

(Grant Number: H324M980229)

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Project Staff and Contributors

The following individuals, listed in alphabetical order, served as project staff at some time during the project and for varying percentages of time (FTE).

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Executive Summary

This final report provides information about a model demonstration project (CFDA 84.324M) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The project titled, *Paraprofessional Supports for Students with Disabilities in General Education Settings,* was awarded to the *Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (UCEDD)* at the University of Vermont and operated between October 1998 and September 2003.

This project addressed an important need of national significance, namely the development, implementation, and evaluation of a model to advance the effective use of paraprofessionals to support students with disabilities in general education classes. The model includes a ten step action-planning process that can be used by teams of school personnel to improve paraprofessional supports provided to students with disabilities in their schools. Field-testing of the model was conducted throughout the project period in a total of 50 public schools across all age/grade levels (i.e., primary, elementary, middle, and high school) in 13 states (i.e., AZ, CA, CO, IL, KS, MN, NY, TN, TX, VA, VT, WA, WI).

This report describes the project's objective and their status along with 15 print products developed by the project that include 5 published research studies and one other study currently being prepared for publication review. The remainder of the report describes efforts to sustain the project's impact after the grant period ends and assurance of distribution.

I. Introduction

This final report provides information about a model demonstration project (CFDA 84.324M) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The project titled, *Paraprofessional Supports for Students with Disabilities in General Education Settings*, was awarded to the *Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (UCEDD)* at the University of Vermont and operated between October 1998 and September 2003.

This project addressed an important need of national significance, namely the development, implementation, and evaluation of a model to advance the effective use of paraprofessionals to support students with disabilities in general education classes. The model includes a ten step action-planning process that can be used by teams of school personnel to improve paraprofessional supports provided to students with disabilities in their schools. The most current version of the tool is available online at http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/guide.html

The design of the project involved close collaboration between staff of the *Center on Disability and Community Inclusion* (University of Vermont) and personnel in public schools, in kindergarten through high school. Field-testing of the model was conducted throughout the project period in a total of 50 public schools across all age/grade levels (i.e., primary, elementary, middle, and high school) in 13 states (i.e., AZ, CA, CO, IL, KS, MN, NY, TN, TX, VA, VT, WA, WI).

The remainder of this report chronicles: (II) the project's objectives and their status, (III) project products, (IV) sustaining efforts after the grant period, and (V) assurances of distribution.

II. Project Objectives and Status

Objective 1:

To develop and refine guidelines for the effective use of paraprofessionals to support the education of students with disabilities.

Corresponding Activities, Accomplishments, and Outcomes:

This objective was completed during the first year of the project and refined in subsequent years. First, the project team consisting of individuals representing a variety of constituencies (i.e., parents of a child with a disability, special educators, school administrator, paraprofessionals, physical therapist, school counselor, state education liaison) held a series of meetings to come to consensus about a *shared understanding*. This was a set of 28 statements, grouped into six categories that reflected a team's agreed upon beliefs about a variety of paraeducator issues. This was disseminated nationally through the *TASH Connections Newsletter* (See Section III, Citation 1) for specific information. These 28 statements were then used as the basis of the development of the planning process that was used by model demonstration sites, *A guide to schoolwide planning for paraeducator supports* (See Section III, Citation 2). This guide is available at: http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/guide.html

Objective 2:

To develop strategies, processes, and materials to operationalize each of the seven conceptual framework components of this project.

Corresponding Activities, Accomplishments, and Outcomes:

In an effort ensure our familiarity with the existing literature, our project staff has identified and reviewed three types of published information regarding

paraprofessionals from 1990-2003: (a) data-based research; (b) non data-based documents (e.g., articles, books); and (c) abstracts of doctoral dissertations. This literature has been summarized by project staff and has been posted on our project's website: (www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport). This literature has also been cross-referenced with the 28 indicators from the *"Shared Understanding..."* This provides individuals and school teams interested in particular subtopics to readily access existing literature targeted to those topics.

This review of literature has also assisted us in identifying gaps in the literature that need to be filled; several project products have filled part of those gaps. For example, at the outset of this project the literature did not include guidelines for making decisions about the need for paraprofessionals; our project developed guidelines (See Section III, Citation 3). There had been no published review of the paraprofessional literature since an article by Jones & Bender (1993) in *Remedial and Special Education* (which predated the 1997 Reauthorization of the IDEA); our project summarized the most recent decade of paraprofessional literature that was published in *Exceptional Children* (See Section III, Citation 4). The literature included a lack of data on issues of respect and appreciation of paraprofessionals and the relationship between paraprofessional service delivery options and teacher engagement with their students who have disabilities; our project conducted a series of descriptive research studies addressing these gaps (See Section III, Citations 5 and 6). Most notably, the literature included no data on schoolwide planning processes to assist schools to improve their paraprofessional supports; the project developed and then field-tested the process, first in four pilot sites (See Section III, Citation 9), and then in 46 additional sites across the country (See

Section III, Citation 13). These evaluation studies are published in *Rural Special Education Quarterly* (pilot study) and *Exceptional Children* (culminating study).

During the subsequent years of the project, our staff has continually expanded the review of the literature and posted citations and summaries on our project website. As project sites developed their own strategies and approaches to addressing the six topical categories in the *"Shared Understanding..."* those also have been cross-referenced to the 28 statements under the heading labeled *"Ideas from the Field."*

Objective 3:

To develop strategies, processes, and materials to operationalize each of the ten model planning steps of this project.

Corresponding Activities, Accomplishments, and Outcomes:

The development aspect of this objective was substantively completed during the first year of the project as evidenced by the development of *A Guide to Schoolwide Planning for Paraeducator Supports*. This guide is posted on our project website, www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/, where it is available in a downloadable pdf format. The guide has been modified twice (July 2000 and January 2001) in response to field-testing.

Objective 4:

To develop a statewide mechanism for training of paraprofessionals to support the educational needs of students with disabilities.

Corresponding Activities, Accomplishments, and Outcomes:

Project staff worked closely with the *Paraeducator Training Project* (another OSEP funded project) to develop a statewide mechanism for training paraprofessionals. This collaboration resulted in the development of four sets of training materials, three for paraprofessionals and one for teachers and special educators who direct the work of paraprofessionals. Each set includes an *Instructor's Manual* and a *Participant's Manual*. All of these training materials (listed below) are available on a cost-recovery basis through the *National Clearing House of Rehabilitation Training Materials* and the *Center on Disability and Community Inclusion* (UCEDD at the University of Vermont). Additionally the project's Entry-Level training materials for paraeducators have been presented in an online format referred to as the *"Paraeducator Resource and Learning Center."* This link on our project website allows paraeducators and others to access the content of our Entry-Level training materials through interactive quizzes, PowerPoint slides shows, and other web-based options.

- *Paraeducator Entry-level Training for Supporting Students with Disabilities*
- *Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors: A Paraeducator Curriculum*
- *Supporting Students with Severe Disabilities: A Paraeducator Curriculum*
- *Teacher Leadership: Working with Paraeducators*

Detailed information regarding each of these products is available online at: http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/paraprep/course.html

The materials listed above have been infused in statewide training efforts operated by the Community College of Vermont and the Vermont State Colleges in their training programs for paraeducators. In this way, the work of the projects is being extended beyond the funded period.

Project staff continuing to participate in a statewide coalition of stakeholders involved in paraeducator issues and practices. The project director maintains ongoing communication with a designated liaison from the Vermont Department of Education. At various points in time that person was Pam Spinney, Ann Lindner or Ann Bleakly.

Objective 5:

To implement the model described in this proposal to improve the effectiveness of paraprofessional support services offered to students with disabilities.

Corresponding Activities, Accomplishments, and Outcomes:

The project's model has been field-tested at the following 50 schools.

1998/99 and 1999/00 School Years

1. Essex Elementary School (K-2), Essex Jct., VT
2. Founders Memorial School (3-4), Essex Jct., VT
3. Essex Middle School (5-8), Essex Jct., VT
4. Essex High School (9-12), Essex Jct., VT

2000-02 School Years

5. Apollo High School (9-12), St. Cloud, MN
6. Artondale Elementary School (PreK-5), Gig Harbor, WA
7. Basalt Elementary School (PreK-4), Basalt, CO
8. Cactus View Elementary (K-6), Phoenix, AZ
9. Camel's Hump Middle School (5-8), Richmond, VT
10. Castleton Elementary School (PreK-8), Castleton, VT

11. Challenger Middle School (6-8), Colorado Springs, CO
12. Cherokee Heights Middle School (6-8), Madison, WI
13. Chisolm Middle School (6-8), Newton, KS
14. Cienega High School (9-10), Vail, AZ
15. Clear Creek Elementary School (K-5), Shawnee, KS
16. Community High School (9-12), West Chicago, IL
17. Crestwood Elementary School (PreK-6) Springfield, VA
18. Crump Elementary School (K-5), Memphis, TN
19. Edward Smith Elementary School (K-6), Syracuse, NY
20. Emerson Elementary School (K-5), Madison, WI
21. Hartland Elementary School (K-8), Hartland, VT
22. Horace Mann Elementary School (K-5), Binghamton, NY
23. H.O. Wheeler School (K-5), Burlington VT
24. Jay/Westfield School (K-6), Jay, VT
25. Levy Middle School (7-8), Syracuse, NY
26. Lindbergh Elementary School (K-5), El Paso, TX
27. Meadowbrook Elementary School (PreK-5), Corpus Christi, TX
28. Missisquoi Valley Union High School (7-12), Swanton, VT
29. Mount Vernon Elementary School (K-8), Chicago, IL
30. Newport Town School (K-8), Newport Center, VT
31. North Elementary School (K-5), Sycamore, IL
32. Northridge Elementary School (K-5), Newton, KS
33. Nottingham Elementary School (PreK-3), Eudora, KS
34. O'Farrell Community School (6-8), San Diego, CA
35. Orchard Ridge Elementary School (K-5), Madison, WI

36. Orwell Village School (K-8), Orwell, VT
37. Parsons High School (9-12), Parsons, KS
38. Price's Fork Elementary School (PreK-5), Blacksburg, VA
39. Ramsey International Fine Arts Center (K-8), Minneapolis, MN
40. Sandy Creek Central School (K-12), Sandy Creek, NY
41. Sheldon Elementary School (K-8), Sheldon, VT
42. South Prairie Elementary School (K-5), Sycamore, IL
43. Southeast Elementary School (K-5), Sycamore, IL
44. Swanton Central School (2-6), Swanton, VT
45. Thatcher Brook Primary School (PreK-4), Waterbury, VT
46. Thomas Jefferson High School (10-12) Auburn, WA
47. USD 372 Silver Lake District (PreK-12), Silver Lake, KS
48. Waits River Valley School (K-8), Fairlee, VT
49. West Elementary School (K-5), Sycamore, IL
50. Westford Elementary School (PreK-8), Westford, VT

Objective 6:

To evaluate the impact of the model described in this proposal to determine its impact on the education of students with disabilities, their families, and service providers.

Corresponding Activities, Accomplishments, and Outcomes:

This objective has been a major focus of project activities throughout the project period. Baseline data collection was completed and analyzed, resulting in three descriptive research studies (See Section III, Citations 5, 6 & 7). These studies reflect extensive data collection from school personnel including interviews, observations and questionnaire responses. Evaluation data on the use of the

model planning process from the first four schools is reported in the journal, *Rural Special Education Quarterly* (See Section III, Citation 9). Evaluation and impact data from the remaining 46 schools is reported in the journal, *Exceptional Children* (See Section III, Citation 13).

Objective 7:

To disseminate information about the project's conceptual framework components, model planning steps, and outcomes in Vermont and nationally.

Corresponding Activities, Accomplishments, and Outcomes:

A variety of dissemination activities have been undertaken as listed below:

- A 3-fold project brochure was developed and is disseminated through the *Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.*
- A letter was sent to special education coordinators in all Vermont school districts informing them about the project and its activities.
- Regional meetings have been held with special education coordinators in the state to share project related information with them and to get their feedback.
- A listserve was created to communicate project related information to all special educators the State of Vermont; it continues to be active.
- Project information has been disseminated through Vermont I-Team Newsletter as well as other regional and statewide newsletters.
- The project web site has been established and continues to be added to regularly (www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/). The site includes project products, links to other paraprofessional sites on the Internet; summaries of professional literature from 1990-2003 regarding paraprofessionals (e.g.,

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doctoral dissertations, research, conceptual articles, training materials), and other project related information. A unique aspect of the website is the cross-referencing of the project's guidelines with paraprofessional literature.

- The Project continues to disseminate information by maintaining an ongoing role in the state Paraeducator Task Force.
- The Project continues to disseminate information by working closely with the Community College of Vermont and the Vermont State Colleges in an effort to make paraeducator training more widely available statewide.
- The Project Director continues to work with the Vermont Department of Education to disseminate project related information statewide.
- Project staff have presented project related information at numerous conferences and workshops, in Vermont and nationally, (e.g., AK, AR, CA, CO, FL, IL, KS, MA, MO, NH, OH, OK, NY, VA, VT).
- Poster sessions regarding the project have been shared at the annual OSEP Project Director's meetings in July.
- Project staff was invited to write a journal article and book chapter pertaining to project content. Both pieces are currently "in press".
- The Project Director has shared project related information as a member of the Related Services & Paraprofessionals Research Design Panel for *COPSSE (Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education).*
- Information about the project was disseminated in the OSEP-sponsored, Spring 2003 issue of *Research Connections in Special Education* on Paraeducators.
- The Project Director responds to several email, mail, and phone inquiries per week about project related information.

III. Project Products & Descriptions

The following is an annotated listing of thirteen products developed partially or completely with support of this grant. Products are listed in chronological order of development.

Citation #1 (Conceptual):

Giangreco, M.F., CichoskiKelly, E., Backus, L., Edelman, S., Tucker, P., Broer, S., CichoskiKelly, C., & Spinney, P. (1999, March). Developing a shared understanding: Paraeducator supports for students with disabilities in general education. *TASH Newsletter, 25*(1), 21-23.

Description: This national newsletter article presents the project's philosophical and practice underpinnings of the project, referred to in the article as a "shared understanding." The bulk of the article lists 28 indicators of paraeducator support divided into six categories: (1) Acknowledging Paraeducators, (2) Orienting and Training Paraeducators, (3) Hiring and Assigning Paraeducators, (4) Paraeducator Interactions with Students and Staff, (5) Roles and Responsibilities of Paraeducators, and (6) Supervision and Evaluation of Paraeducator Services.

Citation #2 (Planning Tool):

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S., & Broer, S. (1999). *A guide to schoolwide planning for paraeducator supports.* Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S., & Broer, S. (2001). *A guide to schoolwide planning for paraeducator supports.* Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Most recent version is online at: www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/guide.html

Description: This 27-page, online, document is manual for school teams to use as a workbook. Following "General Directions and Tips," the manual lists ten planning steps (listed below) and simple directions for their use. Spaces are available for teams to record their work. Available online at:

http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/guide.html

Process Steps:

1. Inform your local school board of your intention to establish a team, or use an existing team, to address paraeducator issues.
2. Ensure that the team includes the appropriate members of the school and local community.
3. Have the team assess their own status and fact-find in relation to six paraeducator topics:

   (a) Acknowledging Paraeducators,

   (b) Orienting & Training Paraeducators,

   (c) Hiring & Assigning Paraeducators,

   (d) Paraeducator Interactions with Students and Staff,

   (e) Roles & Responsibilities of Paraeducators, and

   (f) Supervision & Evaluation of Paraeducator Services.
4. Prioritize and select topics and specific issues that reflect areas of need within the school that the team will work on first.
5. Update your local school board of the team's ranked priorities.
6. Design a plan to address the team's ranked priorities.
7. Identify local, regional, and statewide resources to assist in achieving team's plans.
8. Implement the team's plans.

9. Evaluate the plan's impact and plan next steps.
10. Report impact and needs to your local school community.

Citation #3 (Conceptual):

Giangreco, M.F., Broer, S.M., & Edelman, S.W. (1999). The tip of the iceberg: Determining whether paraprofessional support is needed for students with disabilities in general education settings. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 24* (4), 281-291.

Abstract: Paraprofessionals represent an important and growing segment of the personnel supports utilized in American schools to provide inclusive educational opportunities to students with disabilities. When and how to utilize paraprofessionals effectively persists as an ongoing challenge in the schools. After presenting selected issues associated with the utilization of paraprofessionals, this article extends the discussion on paraprofessional issues by exploring guidelines to assist teams in making decisions about paraprofessional supports. This includes both considerations for the appropriate use of paraprofessionals when assigned, as well as alternative support solutions. Our discussion is intended to advance dialogue on this important topic and to support the appropriate involvement of paraprofessionals in the education of students with disabilities as valued participants on collaborative teams whose roles are clearly defined and supported.

Citation #4 (Literature Review):

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.W., Broer, S.M., & Doyle, M.B. (2001). Paraprofessional support of students with disabilities: Literature from the past decade. *Exceptional Children, 68,* 45-63.

Abstract: This article summarizes and analyzes a set of 43 pieces of professional literature pertaining to paraprofessional supports for students with disabilities published between 1991 and early 2000. Twenty-six non data-based sources and 17 research studies were included. The findings identify topical gaps in the literature, review the major data-based findings, and present implications for the field. The review concludes with suggestions for future research that emphasize the need for more student outcome data, conceptual alignment of roles, training, and supervision, and the exploration of alternatives to paraprofessional supports.

Citation #5 (Research Study):

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.W., & Broer, S.M. (2001). Respect, appreciation, and acknowledgement of paraprofessionals who support students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 67,* 485-498.

Abstract: This study describes the experiences of 103 school personnel, including classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, special educators, and administrators, who worked in four schools, K-12. Data were collected during 22 school visits and 56 individual interviews. Six themes were identified pertaining to how school personnel think about, and act upon, issues of respect, appreciation, and acknowledgement of paraprofessionals who work in general education classrooms supporting students with and without disabilities. The themes

included: (a) nonmonetary signs and symbols of appreciation, (b) compensation, (c) being entrusted with important responsibilities, (d) noninstructional responsibilities, (e) wanting to be listened to, and (f) orientation and support. The article concludes with a discussion of implications for how these data might be applied in schools.

Citation #6 (Research Study):

Giangreco, M.F., Broer, S.M., & Edelman, S.W. (2001). Teacher engagement with students with disabilities: Differences between paraprofessional service delivery models. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 26,* 75-86.

Abstract: The level of engagement that general education teachers have with students with disabilities in their classrooms has been identified in the literature as a key factor affecting the success of inclusive educational experiences. This study describes differences in teacher engagement identified within two different approaches to providing paraprofessional supports in general education classrooms, program-based and one-on-one. Findings were based on the observed and reported experiences of 103 school personnel (e.g., teachers, special educators, paraprofessionals, administrators) from four schools (grades K-12). The study describes characteristics of teacher engagement and disengagement, the involvement of special educators, and phenomena associated with teacher disengagement when one-on-one paraprofessional service delivery was used. The discussion presents implications of these data for school improvement.

Citation #7 (Research Study):

Giangreco, M.F., Broer, S.M., & Edelman, S.W. (2002). "That was then, this is now!" Paraprofessional supports for students with disabilities in general education classrooms. *Exceptionality, 10* (1), 47-64.

Abstract: Increasingly, paraprofessionals are being employed to support a wide array of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. This descriptive study, based on quantitative and qualitative data from 215 school personnel in four schools (K-12), provides a portrait of issues and concerns about paraprofessional supports that have implications for other schools. In addition to demographic and quantitative information about paraprofessionals' roles, the study presents seven themes based on interviews and observations in the schools. Each of the themes addresses a different aspect of the evolution of paraprofessionals services in these four schools. The seven themes address: (a) increases in paraprofessional services, (b) hiring challenges, (c) turnover, (d) paraprofessional role shift to instruction, (e) paraprofessional assignments, (f) insufficient training, and (g) academic skillfulness concerns. The study concludes with practical implications for schools and suggestions for future research, which focus on student outcomes.

Citation #8 (Conceptual):

Giangreco, M.F. & Doyle, M.B. (2002). Students with disabilities and paraprofessional supports: Benefits, balance, and band-aids. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 34* (7), 1-12.

Description: Following a review of current paraprofessional literature and issues, this article addresses five contemporary questions that are within the sphere of control of school personnel, either individually or collectively, to improve paraprofessional supports for students with disabilities

1. To what extent should paraprofessionals be teaching students with disabilities?
2. What impact does the proximity of paraprofessionals have on students with disabilities?
3. How does the utilization of paraprofessional support effect teacher engagement and why should it matter?
4. How can authentic respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of the important work of paraprofessionals be demonstrated?
5. What can be done to improve paraprofessional supports schoolwide?

For each question, pertinent information from the literature is offered as well as implications for practice. In an interrelated fashion these five questions address the benefits associated with well-conceived paraprofessional supports and the balance of paraprofessional supports with supports provided by others (e.g., classroom teachers, special educators, related services providers, peers). This is set within a context that challenges the reader to consider whether our existing or proposed actions to improve paraprofessional supports offer viable solutions that truly accomplish what we intend for students with disabilities or whether they are merely band-aids.

Citation #9 (Research Study):

Giangreco, M.F., Broer, S.M., & Edelman, S.W. (2002). Schoolwide planning to improve paraeducator supports: A pilot study. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 21*(1), 3-15.

Abstract: This pilot study chronicled the use of a process called, *A Guide to Schoolwide Planning for Paraeducator Supports*, by teams in four schools, grades K-12. Data reflect the utilization and outcomes of the process along with the perspectives of 27 study participants. Findings indicated that the process assisted all four schools to self-assess their paraeducator practices, identify priorities in need of improvement, develop action-plans, and implement them. Study participants reported that the process did what it purported to do and rated it highly on a series of consumer-oriented variables (e.g., ease of use). Implications for schools and future use are discussed for improving paraeducator supports.

Citation #10 (Practical Guidelines):

Giangreco, M.F., McEwen, I., Fox, T., & Lisi-Baker, D. (2002). Assisting students who use wheelchairs: Guidelines for school personnel. In M.F. Giangreco (Ed.) *Quick-Guides to Inclusion 3: Ideas for educating students with disabilities* (pp. 141-153). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Description: This article was written by two special educators, a physical therapist, and consumer who uses a wheelchair for mobility. It offers general guidelines about how to assist someone who uses a wheelchair for mobility and specific instructions pertaining to transferring in and out of wheelchairs and mobility tips. It is written in non-technical language, designed primarily for people such as paraprofessionals, peers without disabilities, and teachers. It is available in print and can be downloaded from the publisher's web site for free, http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/giangreco-5826/ebook/registration.htm

Citation #11 (Conceptual):

Giangreco, M.F. (2002). Values, logical practices, and research: The three musketeers of effective education. In J. Downing (Ed.), *Including students with severe and multiple disabilities in typical classrooms (2nd ed.)* (pp. ix-xiii). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Description: This foreword to a book by June Downing discusses the inextricable and synergistic relationships among values, logical practices, and research in the quest for effective education for students with disabilities. It suggests that not only are these three components interrelated, but also that their sequence of application is important, starting with values first, followed by logical practices to match those values, then research. In this conceptualization, research extends beyond what is published in journals to the accountability educational teams have for collecting data on student learning to make data-based decisions about individualized educational programming. Values, logical practices, and research are presented as the *Three Musketeers* of meaningful and effective education.

Citation #12 (Case Example):

Giangreco, M.F., Benay, J., Smith, M. & Doyle, M.B. (Fall 2002). Improving paraeducator supports through schoolwide action planning. *IMPACT*. (Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota), *15*(2), 16-17.

Description: This article was distributed by the University of Minnesota's *Institute on Community Integration* (UCEDD). It provides a brief case example of how the planning process, *A Guide to Schoolwide Planning for Paraeducator Supports* (referred to Citations 1, 9, and 13) was utilized in one school in rural Vermont and includes a first-person account from a paraeducator who also is a parent of two children with disabilities.

Citation #13 (Research Study):

Giangreco, M.F., Edelman, S.W., & Broer, S.M. (2003). Schoolwide planning to improve paraeducator supports. *Exceptional Children, 70*(1), 63-79.

Abstract: This study chronicled the use of a process of planning for paraeducator supports, by cross-constituent teams in 46 schools, grades K-12, in 13 states during the 2000-01 and 2001-02 school years. Data reflect the utilization and outcomes of the process by the 46 teams along with the perspectives of 331 individual team members. Findings indicated that the process assisted these school teams in self-assessing their paraeducator practices, identifying priorities in need of improvement, developing action-plans, and implementing them. Individual team members reported that the process did what it purported to do and rated it highly on consumer-oriented variables (e.g., is a logical process, is easy to use). Additionally, teams supplied culminating reports to document the impact of their work on school personnel and student outcomes. Implications for schools and future use are discussed for improving paraeducator supports and educational supports for students with disabilities.

Citation #14 (Practical Strategies):

Giangreco, M.F., & Doyle, M.B. (2004). Directing paraprofessional work. In C.H. Kennedy & E.M. Horn (Eds.), *Including students with severe disabilities: Putting research into practice* (pp. 185-206). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Description: This chapter begins by offering a brief overview explaining why it is important for educators to assume a leadership role to direct the work of paraprofessionals. Next, the majority of the chapter is devoted to describing four foundational aspects of directing the work of paraprofessionals: (a) welcoming and

acknowledging the work of paraprofessionals, (b) orienting paraprofessionals to their roles in the school, classroom, and with assigned students; (c) planning for paraprofessionals, and (d) communicating with and providing feedback to paraprofessionals. Next, the chapter offers suggestions of where to look for online resources about paraprofessionals. The chapter concludes by considering criteria to determine whether your efforts to direct the work of paraprofessionals have been successful.

Citation #15 (Research Study):

Broer, S.M., Doyle, M.B., & Giangreco, M.F. (in preparation, 2003). Perspectives of students with disabilities about their experiences with paraeducator support (working title). Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.

Abstract: This qualitative study describes how 16 young adults with cognitive disabilities, former public school students, experienced paraeducator support. Participants responded to semi-structured interview questions thus resulting in themes related to paraeducator: (a) characteristics, (b) roles, (c) assignments, (d) proximity, and (e) instruction. Other themes included the limited role of regular education teachers in their education, and experiences of friendships and bullying by peers. Participants offer advise to school in the areas of paraeducator support, regular education involvement, and bullying prevention. Implications for practice are discussed.

IV. Sustaining Efforts After the Grant Period

The following aspects of the project design will contribute to its ongoing impact beyond the funded period.

Materials Availability

Since many of the project's materials and research have been published in a variety of outlets, especially peer-reviewed journals that are indexed and included on online databases, the conceptual information and data-based information generated through this project will continue to be available to consumers on an ongoing basis. Additionally, the statewide and national network of partnerships and collegial relationships established through this project ensure that networks will exist for sharing information and resources after the grant's no-cost extension period has ended. Finally, free materials (e.g., *A Guide to Schoolwide Planning for Paraeducator Supports*) will continue to be available through the continued operation of the project's web site.

Web-Based Resources

The *Center on Disability and Community Inclusion* (the UCEDD at the University of Vermont) is committed to sustaining the project's web site. After the project ends, as resources allow, the former project staff plan to continue to update the web-based resources, specifically the listing and summarization of professional literature about paraprofessional issues. This set of links on the web site are organized chronologically and alphabetically to enhance its utility.

Maintaining Relationships and Links to Networks

The Project Director plans to extend the project's impact by maintaining professional relationships that were active during the project period and linking to networks associated with paraprofessional issues. What follows are some key examples of how these will be maintained. The Project Director will continue to participate on the *Vermont Paraeducator Task Force*, a statewide consortium of organizations and individuals interested in paraprofessional issues in schools. The Project Director will maintain a relationship with a designated staff member from the *Vermont Department of Education* assigned to paraprofessional issues (currently Ann Bleakly). The *Center on Disability and Community Inclusion* plans to maintain the existing listserve to share information with special education administrators in Vermont. An email distribution list is maintained of contact persons from field-test sites so that information can be shared with them (e.g., this final report). Links will be maintained with groups such as the *National Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, TASH*, the *Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education*, the *Northeast Regional Resource Center*, and the organizations that comprise the *IDEA Partnerships*.

V. Assurances Statement of Distribution

A copy of this Final Report is being sent by mail to: (a) the *U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs* (c/o Dr. Beverly Brightly, Project Officer), (b) the *ERIC Clearinghouse* at the Council for Exceptional in Reston, VA. Additionally the report is being posted on our project web site and sent electronically project field-test sites, the *National Resource Center for Paraprofessional in Education and Related Services*, and numerous organizations and colleagues across the United States who have a stake in paraprofessional issues and development.

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